

/The Monguors/

000 on the luckless family.

N
*563 The Mongours will never sell animals, or allow them to leave
M their homes, on the first or fifteenth of the moon, lest luck and
231 prosperity also leave the family.
(777)

M
[886] Although women do all the heavy work, they are not allowed
[775] to kill animals. Women are meant to produce life, not destroy
it. When a man reaches approximately fifty years of age, it is
no longer fitting for him to kill animals. As his own time of
death is approaching, he must guard against reincarnation as an
animal.

N
*563 Women stress neatness and cleanliness. They always wash
M their hands before preparing food or starting any task, and the
515 elders in the home often remind the daughters-in-law of the im-
[784] portance of cleanliness. If they are not clean, the God of the
Hearth will punish them and deprive them and their children of
blessings.

5. Occupations

N
*563 The historical shift of the Mongours from pastoralism to
M farming does not concern us here. Generally speaking, after the
241 Mongours were allotted a fixed territory at the border of Kansu,
233 during the fourteenth century, they were compelled to resort to
433 farming. During a long period of Mongol and Tibetan disturbance
on the frontier, it was difficult for the Mongours to keep large
herds in the relatively small valleys, so they became more and
more dependent upon the farms adjacent to their fortified vil-
lages. They sell grain to the city of Lanchou, but they own much
more livestock than the Chinese farmers. Their transformation
to the agricultural economy is complete, however, and the Mon-
gours have no desire to return to nomadic life.

N
*563 The Mongours learned from the Chinese farmers, but their
M techniques are inferior. Both men and women work in the fields.
241 They raise barley, wheat, rapeseed, hemp, potatoes, colza and
[777] peas. Very little millet is grown. The women also grow garlic,
[432] leeks, onions, cabbage, spinach, watermelons and cantaloupes
in small gardens close to their courtyards. These products are
for sale; the farmers themselves can seldom afford to eat fresh
fruits and vegetables.

N
*563 Some Mongours depend mainly upon their livestock. They
M raise sheep, cows, horses, mules, donkeys and pigs. They keep
231 as many cows and sheep as their pastures will support. Horses
554 are the most valuable animals because they enhance the prestige
[556] of their owners. Wealthy families keep handsome, fast horses
[184] and fine saddles and trappings. They also hire shepherds to take
care of their livestock. In poor families, the women tend the
livestock, both in their stalls and pens and in the pastures dur-
ing the summer rainy season.

N
*563 Shepherds are the highest paid workers in Mongour society
M